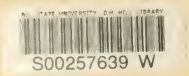

By the same author:

INTRODUCING CATS

INTRODUCING HORSES

BY

ALAN C. JENKINS, F.R.G.S., F.Z.S.

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WE love the cat: it is so cosy. Its purr of contentment is the voice of home, redolent of the welcoming hearth, the kettle on the hob. We pity the dog's servility, its trusting eyes that turn its master into a demi-god who dispenses food and exciting expeditions, even if the latter are only through the local park. But the horse evokes other sentiments. It is admiration that we feel for him, admiration not untinged with awe. The horse embodies that irresistible combination of beauty and strength; the feminine and the masculine are both contained within him.

The cat has earned its milk by keeping ward over Man's granaries, though from time to time too close an association with witches has made it suspect. The dog, creeping out in the dawn of time to scavenge round human settlements, adopted Man and has earned its keep by guarding our flocks. Cat and dog have been like fustian servitors who have become friends of the family.

But the horse has trod prouder ways than that. The horse has helped to make history — indeed, the history of the horse is in many ways the history of Man. Even when it was drawing a plough, no less than when it was smelling the battle from afar off, it was helping Man to create the civilisation which has produced such a bewildering pattern of beauty and cruelty, wisdom and folly.

* * *

When most people think of the horse of the past they conjure up a vision of proud chargers pawing the earth, mightily clad in chain mail, with fearsome spikes on their brows; ponderously bearing armoured knights who rode out to joust with their rivals for the honour of fair ladies, as in the lists in which Ivanhoe fought.

But it was long ages before the horse was capable even of carrying a man, let alone a warrior weighed down with casque and breastplate. In fact, if we go far enough back — some fifty million years — we find the ancestor of the horse an insignificant four-toed creature the size of a hare with a name almost as long as itself, for the zoologists call it Hyracotherium and say that it roamed the earth during the Eocene age.

With time — and time indeed is relative, so that 'a thousand ages are like an evening gone' — this dwarf flourished and became twice the size and acquired a new name, Mesohippus. A mere twenty odd million years ago it had made still further progress and was now the Merychippus, a genus which developed into the Pliohippus which was approaching the size of a Shetland pony, and so at last to the genuine Equus which walked on one toe only, indeed we could say on its toe-nail, for that is what its hoof consists of as anyone who has seen a neglected horse will realise. In this it is unique and has been one of the most absorbing examples in evolution and you can still see the link with the far-off Hyracotherium in the vestiges of the toes on a horse's fore-legs.

* * *

The first record we have of Man's interest in horses is embodied in the exciting paintings on the walls of such caves as Lascaux in the Dordogne or Altamira in Spain and the more recently discovered caves of the Sahara. These remarkable paintings are of wild horses that roamed all over the vast plains of Europe and Asia; prehistoric man hunted them for their flesh as he hunted the bison and the deer. In some countries the taste for horse-flesh still continues and in Paris it is so accepted that horse butchers exhibit a special sign of a horse's head in gilt. Nowadays the direct descendants of those same wild horses linger on in Mongolia, an echo of the days when our ancestors went about in skins and stumbled upon such wondrous discoveries as smelting iron.

Secure in its swiftness, the horse kept its freedom for a long time. The dog and the ox and the ass had all gone into human bondage long before the first horse felt a man's knees gripping its sides and squealed in fury at the insult. It must indeed have made that man seem a very god as he rode astride what he considered the most splendid animal in creation and it is easy to understand how the myth of the Centaur, half man, half horse, grew up. To men, perhaps of the forest, who had not yet encountered the horse, the first sight of a mounted man must have been an awe-inspiring moment, just as the Araucanian Indians were wonderstruck by the mounted warriors of Cortez and Pisarro who brought the horse to the New World.

* * *

Perhaps the first literary reference to the horse as a mount capable of carrying a man in the saddle is to be found in the Second Book of Kings, in which Rabshakeh, envoy of King Shalmaneser of Assyria, said to Hezekiah, King of Judah, 'I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them.'

Chariot-horses, both for sport and warfare, had been in use for much longer, even as far back as the ninth century B. C., while later on, chariot races were a regular feature of Greek and Roman games, a sport that has its modern counterpart in the trotting-races held in the Soviet Union and the United States of America. Boudicca (Boadicea), Queen of the Iceni, springs to mind at the mention of chariots, in which she and her woad-painted tribesmen descended upon Londinium in the last savage revolt of the Britons against the Roman legions.

But cavalry as such was a later development and it was in the East that its use was first employed on a large scale. The Golden Hordes of Genghis Khan in the twelfth century and the warriors of Tamurlane two hundred years later, were mounted on swift, agile, shaggy Mongolian ponies, from which, with bow and arrow, they fought a highly mobile campaign in a manner small boys associate with Red Indians.

But in Europe it was only in the seventeenth century that cavalry became an accepted branch of warfare. Most people think of Oliver Cromwell as a politician, even a dictator. It is largely forgotten that he was a brilliant general in his own right and it was he who first perceived the value of cavalry as a devastating massed blow once the enemy had begun to waver. Some military authorities even say that Cromwell's use of his cavalry at Marston Moor and Naseby was the pattern for Napoleon's victory at Jena.

The horse has indeed stamped its imprint upon the pages of history.

* * *

The development of the horse, as distinct from its evolution, was, from Man's point of view, also a lengthy process even though measured in generations rather than eons. Hundreds of years passed before men began consciously to breed a finer horse and develop distinct breeds. Early Man would have been more familiar with the rugged little pony of the Dartmoor crags or that nimble, foam-maned mount which the *gardiens* of the Camargue ride when they tend the black bulls than with the massive Suffolk Punches whose cumbrous hooves trampled the soil in later ages or the fiery Arab whose proud eye and curving nostril is the essence of equine majesty.

In England, William the Conqueror was one of the first to take an interest in improving the horse. He introduced Spanish horses to the country and forbade the use of the horse in

ploughing. The horse was considered too noble for such menial work, for which the humble ox was more fitted. In order to obtain a horse capable of carrying knights clad in all the ironmongery of the day (a ton and a half of it sometimes), King John imported Flemish stallions into the country; and successive kings, whatever their other follies, were wise enough to appreciate the incalculable value of the horse in the service of Man: indeed, did not one of them on a notable occasion vainly offer his kingdom in exchange for a horse?

But as for the English 'thoroughbred' (a term which has become current usage in so many walks of life and also so many languages), the most important events undoubtedly took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century when three famous Arab stallions were imported, namely the Byerley Turk, the Darley Arabian, and the Godolphin Arab. Oldest and most beautiful of all breeds, the Arab is the king of horses. Its Arabic name of 'Kehilan' means indeed thoroughbred and for thousands of years the Arabs of the desert jealously guarded its reputation and its pedigree. It is from such stock that many of the horses that hit the headlines today are descended.

But whether pedigree or piebald, pony or charger, the horse has been Man's constant companion. It has helped to shape great empires; it has helped man to win his daily bread. It has provided him with sport and relaxation, from the armoured knight tilting at the quintain to the hard-riding squire crashing his way over the hedges. It has taken Man on his pilgrimages, as in the days of Chaucer; it has borne him to his last resting-place in the grave.

Man has ridden the horse through the ages on his marvellous quest in search of the Truth; now he has dismounted and goes forward in his machines which, like Frankenstein's monster, threaten to become the master. Is it old-fashioned to wonder sometimes if the pace of the horse was not a pleasanter gait?

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This was the horse our cavemen ancestors knew. Its primeval antecedents are apparent in its appearance. It is a horse, yet somehow not quite a horse and, indeed, Lydekker, the great naturalist, described it as 'being intermediate in character between the horse on the one hand and the kiang and onager on the other'.

Swift, agile, hardy, it is the only true wild horse that survives. In ever-decreasing numbers it grazes the remote steppes of Mongolia. It is known as Prejevalski's Horse after the Russian explorer who 'discovered' it during the last century.

Another early horse. In fact, the first horse that many of us encounter. The rocking horse in the nursery is often a child's first memory. He may not run in the 3.30, but 'Dobbin Grey' ('He could amble, He could trot, All around the chimney-pot') has run many a thrilling race in childish imagination.

But for many of us, our first encounter with all the excitement and beauty of the horse is at the circus, with its magic fairyland of red-nosed clowns and acrobats and tinsel ladies riding bareback. The use of performing animals for entertainment is a controversial issue, but nobody could suggest that these Danish Knabstrupps at Olympia are in any way browbeaten.

The circus in this country originates from a dashing sergeant-major of Dragoons, Philip Astley. Tired of regimental drills and ceremonials, he took to bareback riding, found it paid, and built up a circus that was patronised by kings and princes from all over Europe. In their novels, both Dickens and Thackeray describe visits to Astley's which stood on a site in Lambeth facing Westminster Bridge.

Whether it is the rocking horse or the circus that sparks off the idea, many a child dreams of a pony of its own. The increasing popularity of riding for children is shown by the fact that the Pony Club has become the largest horse association in the world, with branches in countries as far apart as the United States and India.

But if Henry VIII had had his way, at any rate in England, there would have been no ponies to ride; for in order to improve the quality of the English horse he forbade the keeping of horses under fifteen hands, or 'little stand horses and nags of small stature', as he called them, and ordered any wild ones to be rounded up and killed. It is only because some of these escaped to wilder places, such as Dartmoor and Exmoor and the Welsh hills, that any of our native breeds of pony survive today.

In cities and towns the trouble is that very often the only horses to be seen are in the form of statues. Many people will recognise this fiery group of Queen Boudicca (Boadicea) and her daughters who led the British tribes in revolt against the Roman legions. The ancient Britons were expert charioteers and used their wiry ponies with immense skill, though it is doubtful whether their horses were quite as sleek and handsome as the sculptor has portrayed them here.

The beauty and majesty of the horse has been a source of inspiration to the artist throughout the ages. From the stone-carved hunting scenes of the Assyrians to the majestic canvases of Velasquez he has striven to express his admiration for this animal that has meant so much to mankind.

Apart from statues there are always the Mounted Police with their wise, patient horses whose equanimity no amount of din or confusion, including brass bands and fireworks, can disturb. Brought to a perfection of control by months of arduous training at Imber Court, these magnificent horses help to handle vast crowds firmly but gently. There are still 199 horses in the Mounted Branch of the Metropolitan Police, while the next largest mounted force in the country is in Lancashire, which has twenty-six. It costs about £125 a year to keep a police horse in fodder, bedding, shoeing, stable equipment and veterinary attention.

But the horse has always served man as an individual, not mankind in general, and it did not concern him whether he kept the Queen's Peace or helped to make hazardous the King's Highway. One of the most renowned horses in history was Black Bess, reputed to have carried Dick Turpin on his legendary ride to York.

Forerunners of the Mounted Police were the Bow Street 'Horse Patroles', which were composed of ex-Dragoons who wore a uniform of a leathern hat, blue coat with yellow buttons, blue trousers, and the same scarlet waistcoat that the Bow Street Runners wore. They were armed to the teeth with cutlasses, pistols and truncheons, and were splendidly mounted; as indeed they had to be in dealing with such desperadoes as 'Sixteen-String' Jack Rann, a highwayman who was eventually dragged off to gaol wearing 'darbies' weighing upwards of 42 lbs. The roads between Hounslow and Blackheath were a terror for the traveller and the Horse Patroles came on beat between five and seven o'clock every evening at a distance of five miles from London, and patrolled the roads until midnight, for which their weekly wage was twenty-eight shillings.

Sometimes horses themselves have to be rounded up, as well as men — though for different reasons. In the vast spaces of the Australian outback the 'brumbies' roam. These are not genuinely wild horses although they pass much of their life in complete freedom, with only the kangaroos and the dingoes for company. Many of the brumby herds date from the days of the 1851 Gold Rush when men, seized by the fever for quick riches, abandoned everything, leaving their stock to fend for itself. Now on the skyline a man comes to threaten the freedom of some of the brumbies.

Now the round-up is in full swing. Full tilt the wild horses are driven towards the distant corrals where they will start a very different life.

In view of the fact that so much of Australia is ideally suited for horse breeding, it is strange to think that the horse was unknown there until it was introduced by western man at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Australian 'waler', a mixture of Dutch, Spanish, Arab and English breeds, is a fine saddle horse and a bold jumper. At one time it held the record for the world's highest ridden jump, eight feet four inches.

All over the world the round-up goes on, for man is eager to exploit the animal which has rendered him more service than any other. The Cossacks have for centuries been renowned horsemen and even during the last war, in which aircraft and tanks predominated, Cossack Cavalry often struck terror into the enemy. This drove of horses is being rounded up on a Collective farm in the Caucasus.

Maurice Hindus once wrote: 'One of the Cossack's great loves was the horse. He fondled it, flattered it, whistled to it, sang to it, bestowed on it his deepest solicitude, his tenderest words. It was his comrade in arms, it carried him to faraway lands and battlefields.'

All but one or two of these horses are honey-coloured palominos. Proud will be the men who ride them. Australian range-riders are second to none in their prowess.

When the round-up is complete and the gates of the stockade have been slammed, then comes the moment of indignity. The horse attains the zenith of its powers in the service of man, but first it has to be broken to the will of man and it fights desperately for the freedom it has left behind. It is odd that the English, with their long love for horses, should use the term horse-breaking, for what we really mean is horse-making. In Chile they speak of 'horse-gentling'.

Gradually the horse comes to recognise the authority of man and is content to do his bidding. His training does not necessarily start when he is young; for some types of work horses are between five and seven years of age before any attempt is made to school them. This is a scene in the basic training of a new horse (which may have cost up to £200) in the Mounted Police. First he learns to obey verbal instructions and then the rein.

The horse is the servant of man, but nothing could be less servile than the proud alertness with which he surveys the world. 'His neigh is like the bidding of a monarch and his countenance enforces homage' (Henry V).

Pride indeed is manifest in every movement of the horse. The arched necks of this Russian troika are redolent of strength and beauty. The troika is essentially a Russian form of driving and the word derives from the number of horses involved, namely, three. A troika can draw either a wheeled vehicle or a sleigh and readers of Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' will remember

Natasha's exciting ride when she went to visit the Melyukovs. '*Bang, bang!* went the first sledge over a cradle-hole in the snow of the road, and each of the other sledges jolted in the same way, and rudely breaking the frostbound stillness the troikas began to speed along the road one after the other.'

17

The first thing that springs to mind when we think of horses is work. Though the tractor is becoming more and more predominant there are still parts of the country where horses help man to win his daily bread. Yet it was many centuries before the horse was used as a farm animal. In the Domesday Book the ox is the only draught animal mentioned in connection with the plough; not until the twelfth century was the horse yoked with oxen for that purpose. Possibly one reason for the increased use of the horse was the 'yellow plague', which, in the middle ages, devastated domestic animals, particularly cattle.

'Is my team ploughing,
That I was used to drive,
And hear the harness jingle,
When I was man alive?'

A. E. Housman: *A Shropshire Lad*

In the days of William the Conqueror it was forbidden by law to use the horse for ploughing. The horse was considered too noble for such menial work; even in Victoria's reign oxen could still be seen dragging the plough.

All over the world the horse toils in the fields. Even in Denmark, with its intensive farming, horse teams haul the combines when the oats are harvested. There are more than half a million horses in this small country.

'Leave the cut swath all day; and air by rake
Next morning and, if weather still be set,
Gather to cocks for carting, but should wet
Flatten the cocks, then shall you tedd and shake
Again when sun return . . .'

V. Sackville West: *The Land*

In France particularly farmers cling to the horse in preference to the machine and their sturdy Percherons render tireless work in the rich plains of the French Middle West, the granary of France. The Percheron, which was developed in a district of Eastern Normandy known as La Perche, is perhaps the most popular and famous heavy draught horse in existence. It is exceptionally short legged but at the same time surprisingly active and is docile enough to be easily handled.

The service the horse gives to man is as varied as it is ungrudging. In the forests we find them at work hauling the timber which plays such an essential part in our lives.

Even 'snaking' home a solitary log for the family hearth is useful. Here a Vermont farmer, in the north east of the United States, fills in the idle winter days by cleaning up windfalls from his land. The horse he uses for his farm chores is primarily of the native Vermont breed known as the Morgan. Short and stocky, about 14 hands, and 1,000 lbs in weight, the Morgan is an exceptionally strong work horse.

Maple syrup is a useful sideline for Vermont farmers and here a team of Morgans hauls the maple-sap to the farm sugarhouse for processing.

More logs to be hauled and this time near the Arctic Circle. Here hardy Finnish horses drag sledge loads of timber, the 'green gold' of Finland, to the saw mill. As one would expect, the medium-sized Finnish horses are as tough as their masters and agile as well. Yet they are used almost exclusively for draught purposes and the sight of a mounted man in Finland is rarer than snowflakes at Midsummer.

And when the logs have been sawn into standards the horses haul them to the rail-head . . . where the iron horse takes over.

Unusual jobs are all in the day's work for the horse. At one time many lifeboats were hauled to and from the sea by teams of Shire horses such as these. Many a seaman's life may have depended on equine speed and strength. Some of these 'Lifeboat Horses' used to recognise the maroon which was fired to summon the Lifeboat crew. Long after its retirement one of the horses which regularly helped to haul the Hoylake Lifeboat heard a maroon fired one day when it was working in the neighbouring fields. It immediately became very excited and made for the boathouse. In its eagerness it had a heart attack and dropped down dead.

Almost alone in the cities, where the stink and din of motor traffic prevails, a few brewers still maintain with pride their magnificent teams of dray horses. The slow-moving but immensely powerful Shire horse is capable of drawing a weight of five tons. It is probably descended from the so-called Great Horse of England which was bred to carry armoured knights who were probably wearing as much as a ton and a half of armour.

The usual idea of the shepherd is of a lonely figure leaning on his crook watching his flock. But in the Welsh hills the shepherds often take to horseback to round up their sheep and bring them down for shearing.

Wales has produced some excellent horses, notably the Welsh Cob which has been used to up-grade trotting horses in various countries, while the little Welsh Mountain Pony has earned a reputation for courage, strength and intelligence, whether as a child's mount or as a pit pony.

On the other side of the world, ten thousand miles away, Australian farmers mount their horses to bring the cattle in for inspection. The gray mare looking on has not lost her rider but has come along of her own accord for the fun of it.

But there was no fun in war: yet, faithful to man, the horse bore him even unto death. The motto of the horse through the ages might well have been 'Theirs not to reason why . . .' The charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava, caused as it was by the reckless folly of commanding officers, was one of the most stirring and valiant cavalry actions in history. Of it

a French general made his famous remark, 'C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.' Horses and men were decimated to a tragic extent, as this picture of the roll call after the action shows.

The horse has indeed stamped its imprint on the pages of history. It has helped to overthrow dictators and to establish great empires. The victories of Napoleon were dependent to a considerable degree on his use of cavalry which, he declared, was 'equally effective at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a battle'. His own defeat at Waterloo was hastened by the charge of the Scots Greys.

Nowadays, perhaps fortunately, the use of horses in battle is a thing of the past. One of the few remaining Cavalry Units, the King's Troop, is used for ceremonial purposes.

Another stirring sight no longer to be seen is the horse-drawn fire-engine that went careering through the streets at break-neck speed, whooped on by small boys.

Famed in song and verse and story as a mighty man, the smith was once an essential character of the English scene. Now, alas! he is rarely encountered, a fact which runs parallel to the diminishing use of the horse.

'What more exciting than the roar of the blast', wrote Stanley Baldwin in *The English Heritage;* 'and even now I can still feel the thrill which stirred my small heart when I was allowed to work the big bellows . . . How exciting, too, the smell of the smithy! The curious acrid smell of water thrown on the red hot iron, the warm steam of the cart horses, the burning hoof when the shoe was being fitted. And how I admired when the smith himself hit the shoe by accident against his palm and nothing happened but the sizzling noise of burnt horn and an exclamation of justifiable dissatisfaction at his own clumsy workmanship. How I longed to have a horny hand!'

All work and no play is good for neither man nor horse. Among the most eagerly awaited events of the farmers' year are the point-to-point races organised by different hunts. The heyday of steeple-chasing was in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when hard-riding squires rode hell-for-leather across country, using surrounding church steeples as their landmarks.

Hunting nowadays would be non-existent were it not for the support of farmers. Not only is it across their land that the hunt takes place but it is also the farmers themselves who are its keenest supporters.

' "I means", said Mr Jorrocks, "you'll be desperation fond of 'unting?"

' "Fond o' huntin'!" replied James Pigg. "O faith is I — there's nout like huntin'. " '

Many a farm horse, ridden by many a farmer, has been entered in the toughest, most famous steeplechase in the world, the Grand National. Becher's Brook and Valentine's are household words to people who would hardly know one end of a horse from another. The first real Grand National or 'The Great Steeplechase' as it was known, was run in 1839 and was won by a horse named Lottery, ridden by James Mason. One of the greatest steeplechasers ever was the famous Golden Miller which, in addition to winning the Grand National in 1934 (in 9 minutes $20\frac{2}{5}$ seconds, despite the fact that it was carrying twelve stone two pounds), carried off the prize in twenty-eight other races, including the Cheltenham Gold Cup for five successive years.

The English have for long been famous for their devotion to horses and their experience in breeding. As far as the English thoroughbred is concerned the most important event undoubtedly took place at the beginning of the eighteenth century when three famous Arab stallions were imported, namely, the Byerley Turk, the Darley Arabian, and the Godolphin Arab. It is now we who export breeding stock, and buyers from all over the world attend the bloodstock sales at Newmarket. There is money in it, and this chestnut foal by Fair Trial out of Monsoon was sold to an American buyer for 19,000 guineas, the largest sum ever paid for a foal at an auction in this country.

There's hard work in it, too, and the training of a racehorse is a skilled and delicate job.

And the culmination of it all is the Derby, the most famous race in the world. Racing has been called the Sport of Kings, but though kings become fewer and fewer, the popularity of racing continues, right down to the humblest errand-boy who chances his 'two bob each way'.

In many countries, notably the Soviet Union and the United States, trotting races are more popular than ordinary riding races. They are a link with the chariot races that took place in Greek and Roman arenas two thousand and more years ago. In the Soviet Union the 'hippodromes' (as the racetracks are correctly known) are part of the State measures taken to develop pedigree breeding. It is forbidden to use horses of non-pedigree stock or those which have inherited faults such as stringhalt.

Great attention has been paid in Russia to breeding trotters, the most famous of these being the Orlov breed, named after a Russian nobleman of the eighteenth century. The Orlov trotter has a pleasing sprightly action and is a fast runner. The record holder was the mare Utekha which covered 6,400 metres in 8 minutes 55 seconds. In winter trotters race on an ice track, wearing special shoes with sharp crampons.

Polo originated in China, spread to India and, as 'Hockey on horseback', was brought to England by the 10th Hussars in about 1870. The Hussars had seen with admiration the game being played by the Manipuries, one of the Frontier hill tribes, who rode tough little ponies only 11 or 12 hands. Nowadays a rather larger pony of about 15 hands is used, but it remains one of the wiriest, gamest and most intelligent of animals, which enjoys the game as much as its rider does.

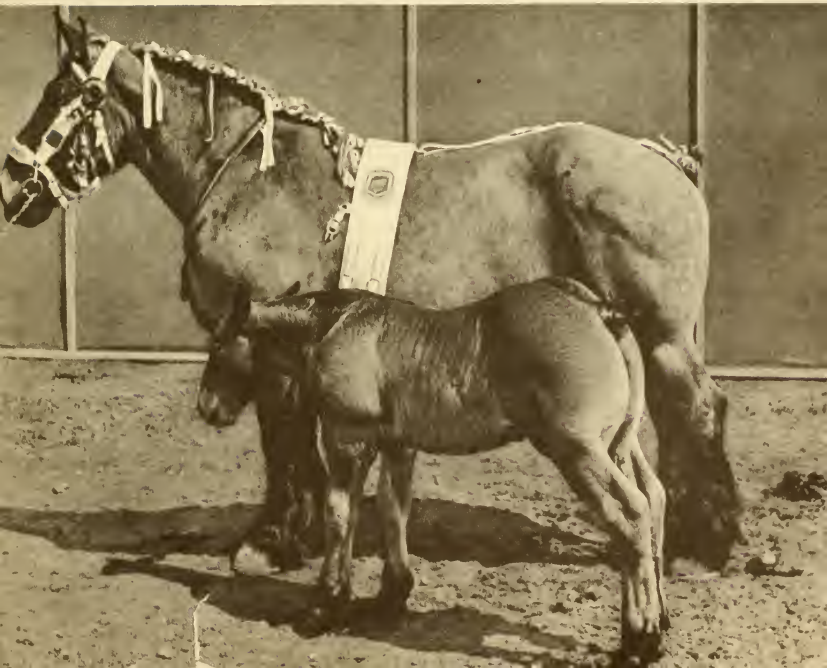
As in many other games, English enthusiasm for polo has resulted in its becoming popular in many countries. Consequently polo ponies are great travellers. Teams from the Argentine come to Cowdray Park; English teams visit the United States. The polo ponies in these pictures have travelled by air from Baghdad.

But strength counts as well as speed. What could portray the power of the horse better than this Jutland stallion, a type of horse used extensively in Denmark.

A match for it in strength is the Clydesdale, a magnificent breed which combines weight, size and activity. Upgraded by the introduction of Flemish stallions, the Clydesdale was developed in Lanarkshire in the mid-eighteenth century. One of its outstanding characteristics is that it has quality and strength without being gross and bulky in appearance, and this is well exemplified by these two stallions from an Ulster farm.

But again the Percheron. For wherever draught horses are discussed the name of Percheron is bound to crop up. This superb breed became well known in Britain during the first world war, when English farmers' sons, going on leave, spread reports of its splendid qualities. More than three thousand pure-bred Percherons have been registered in this country and the breed is to be found all over the British Dominions.

Clearly this Ardennes foal was born on a Saturday
and it will have to work hard for its living.



We think of the Soviet Union as a land of tractors, but draught horses still have much to do on the collective farms. Several foreign breeds, such as the Brabancon, Ardennes and Clydesdale, have been used in evolving a Russian heavy draught horse, but there is also a native heavy breed known as the Beetewk.

But strength and toughness isn't the monopoly of the big 'uns. Here is Manchado, one of the toughest ponies ever. This was one of the pair of horses with which the late A. F. Tschiffeley made his famous ride across two continents from Chile to New York. Manchado was already sixteen years old at the beginning of this epic adventure through tropical jungle and parching desert.

A woman's crowning glory is her hair; many a woman would be proud of tresses like these.

But the horse possesses other attributes than beauty, strength or speed. The essence of wild savagery is manifest in these fighting stallions. Nor is this the only surprising feature of the horse. Who would expect it to produce milk, even as the humble cow does? Yet the Kirghiz tribesmen of Central Asia milk their mares daily and from the fermented liquid make an alcoholic drink known as *kumiss*. Equally surprising is the fact that horses are not always simple grass-eaters. In the region of the Persian Gulf, for example, dates and fish are common fare for them, while the Tanghan horses of Tibet are often given pig's blood and raw liver.

In every quarter of the world the horse serves Man; even on the edge of the Arctic. The Icelandic pony can claim to be one of the purest breeds in Europe. It was first introduced into Iceland by Viking settlers more than a thousand years ago and during the last 800 years no other horses or ponies have been imported into the country. The Icelander is strong, healthy and pretty and is one of the very few breeds of horse acclimatised to Arctic conditions. Captain Scott used Icelandic ponies during his ill-fated expedition to the South Pole. In Iceland pony-trekking is a very popular sport and these hardy, willing little animals are ideally suited to it. During the winter the ponies stay out in all weathers and fend completely for themselves.

In the Far West, as in the Far North, the horse works with man. The fine horses of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police are as famous as the Mounties themselves.

We take the Red Indian and his horse for granted, yet it was only in the sixteenth century that the Spanish Conquistadores introduced the horse into the American continent.

In the wildest parts of the world the horse ventures with the prospector. The horse has been the companion of man on some of his greatest adventures in search of wealth.

From the Arctic to the Tropics the horse is to be found wherever man needs him. These Percheron brood mares are the pride of a South African ranch.

And these gaily caparisoned horses are the pride of Shehu warriors in Northern Nigeria.

From the thoroughbred . . .

. . . to the pony without a pedigree . . .

From the farmer's workaday mount . . .

. . . to the Champion . .

. . . he is Man's friend.

In any language . . .

. . . In Man's pleasure . . . as in this riding party setting out into the Sun Valley of Idaho . . .

. . . or this sledge load of Canadians on their way to the ski-slopes.

These circus Arabs and their companions are the pride of the ring.

But what are those striped horses? Wild cousins of the horse, the zebras still roam the African veldt in their hundreds, though once it was in their thousands. Another species of zebra, the quagga, was ruthlessly hunted by the Boer farmers until the last of what had once been numbered in millions disappeared, one of the worst examples of man's thoughtless greed, on a level with his treatment of the American bison.

It is not impossible to train the zebra and fifty years ago a pair of the animals could be seen drawing a carriage in Hyde Park.

Another cousin, the Wild Ass, still roams the arid brush of Somaliland and Ethiopia. A handsome, strong, bluish-grey animal, standing as much as twelve hands at the withers, it is swift and graceful. Even bigger is the Asiatic Wild Ass, the Kiang, which still exists in Tibet and Mongolia, sometimes in the hills as much as 16,000 feet above sea-level.

The humble domestic donkey goes on bearing its load through the ages... even on the road to Samarkand, as in this picture. Overworked, derided, the donkey yet made one journey more glorious than any its more glamorous cousin, the horse, ever carried out.

'Tell ye the daughter of Sion,
Behold, thy King cometh unto thee,
Meek, and sitting upon an ass...'

Freedom to worship in their own way was the compelling motive that took many of the early settlers to America. Here their descendants ride to church in horse-drawn buggies whose style has not changed for many generations.

And here other Americans go visiting friends in an equally old-fashioned 'surrey'.

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Ride him, cowboy!

As all small boys know, no book about horses would be complete without a cowboy or two. One of the most colourful cowboy shows is the Calgary Stampede. It begins with a three-mile-long parade of some 3,000 participants, including red-coated Mounties, honest-to-goodness cowpunchers, Stoney, Sarcee, and Blackfoot Indian chiefs, braves, squaws and papooses in their native dress, twenty brass bands, pioneers and old-timers. An unforgettable sight, full of fun and colour, this parade reminds Canadians of their picturesque heritage — and also of the part the horse has played in their history.

And if there are still small boys in these enlightened days who don't know how to tighten the cinch on the saddle of a cow-pony, here's how it's done.

It goes without saying that cattle-rustlers have got to come into the picture as well.

But it isn't only in the Wild West that cowboys are to be found. In the south of France, in the marshy estuary of the Rhône, known as the Camargue, 'gardiens' or cowboys have tended the black bulls for many centuries, in fact long before the ranges of Texas or Arizona echoed with the thud of horses' hooves.

A 'gardien' in the Camargue district of France . . .

. . . where the 'Jeux des Gardiens' is a big event.

It's not surprising that such a striking character as the horse should have found his way into films. Many are the parts he has been called upon to play . . . from the hold-up, as in 'Robbery under Arms' . . .

. . . to the romance, such as 'The Gypsy and the Gentleman' . . .

. . . or the drama, such as 'The Throne of Blood', a Japanese version of Macbeth.

Not content with being a film star, the horse has broken into television as well, as in this B. B. C. production of 'Precious Bane'.

Altogether, the horse has a pretty full life . . . and at the end of the day's work he is quite glad to amble off for a drink . . .

. . . and a rest in the fields with his companions.

But it's not long before he's in the shafts again.

And here he takes a bow for all the applause he certainly deserves.